

MINUTES

NORTHEAST MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

WEDNESDAY – MAY 21, 2003

A meeting of the Northeast Municipal Advisory Committee took place on the above date at 7:00 P.M. at Highland Oaks Middle School, 2375 N.E. 203rd Street, Miami, Fl.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Marjorie Auth
Japp Donath
Kenneth H. Friedman
Glenn H. Gopman
William C. Koppel
Jill B. Perez
Stanley B. Price
Roslyn B. Weisblum

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF PRESENT:

Sally Heyman, Miami-Dade County Commissioner
Lauren Morris, Administrative Aide to Commissioner Heyman
Office of Management and Budget, UMSA Policy Analysis and Services Unit:
Sylvia Crespo-Tabak, Budget Coordinator
Jorge M. Fernandez, Budget Analyst
Vivian S. Duyos

1. The meeting was called to order.

2. **Introduction**

Sylvia Crespo-Tabak from Miami-Dade introduced herself, gave a brief explanation of the municipal advisory committee process, and introduced her staff members, Jorge Fernandez and Vivian Duyos.

3. **Sally Heyman, Miami-Dade County Commissioner**

Commissioner Heyman greeted the attendees and thanked the committee members, who she appointed, based on their interest in their community and in participating in their own municipal advisory committee (MAC). She introduced Lauren Morris from her office. Commissioner Heyman, in sponsoring the MAC, is committed to having the process move forward expeditiously and have the County bear the financial burden wherever possible. The County is prepared to help us move forward with incorporation or annexation if that is what we want.

4. Sylvia Crespo-Tabak stated that the Oath of Office will not be administered tonight, since the required paperwork from some of the committee members was not yet received. At the next meeting everything that took place tonight can be ratified. She stated that officers should be selected. Other committees have had a chair, a vice-chair, a recording secretary; sometimes people have taken turns being recording secretary, since it is a public meeting functioning under

the Sunshine Law, and minutes must be maintained. Meetings will be recorded and the recording secretary may receive a copy.

5. Committee members introduced themselves.

6. Officers

Motion by Glen Gopman, seconded by Bill Koppel, nominating Ken Friedman to chair the municipal advisory committee.

Motion Carried

Motion by Stan Price, motion seconded, nominating Glen Gopman as vice chair of the committee.

Motion Carried

Motion by Glen Gopman, motion seconded, nominating Roslyn Weisblum as recording secretary.

Motion Carried

7. Sunshine Law

Sylvia Crespo-Tabak discussed the Sunshine Law. As an advisory board to the Board of County Commissioners we are subject to the Sunshine Laws, which means that we can only discuss committee business in the sunshine in an advertised public meeting. We can socialize together; we can attend functions together; but we cannot conduct committee business. If we are at a homeowners association meeting and the issue of incorporation or annexation of the area or committee business comes up, if we do not advertise the meeting, only one person will be able to remain in the room. Her suggestion is that we advertise the homeowners' association meetings and make them open to the public. Agendas will be set for each Committee meeting. MAC meetings are advertised every Monday in the local section of the Herald usually page 5B. Occasionally it will be advertised in the main section of the Herald.

8. Work Plan

Ms. Crespo-Tabak continued with discussion of the map and work plan. Included in our packets is a copy of the study area. Boundaries are not etched in stone. We can make revisions. A work plan has been drafted. The plan can be adjusted. We can have meetings more often and have meetings without staff, which is recommended. Meetings must be advertised and should probably be held in a public building. Videotape of 6 hour Commission meeting that took place in 1999 will be brought to us at the next meeting. Committee members are required to view this tape on their own. Reason for this is that during that workshop issues and concerns regarding the impact that incorporation of particularly affluent areas has on the rest of UMSA and UMSA services were addressed. It will familiarize us with why some sections of the Code read as they do, and why we are going through this process. Other areas, which do not get to vote, may be affected by what we do.

9. Ken Friedman, Chair

Mr. Friedman as an introduction provided a brief history. Process has been going on for 15-20 years. Not a new concept. Met with North Miami Beach several years ago looking into whether that would be a viable alternative for the community. Mentioned recent incorporations of neighboring cities as well as MACs on the drawing board right now. UMSA is shrinking. 6 of our police force will now be working in City of Miami Gardens. Proactive stance – if we are going to be, what do we want to be? No hidden or preset agendas by anyone here. We want to hear from the public but first we do need to take care of committee business. Some conflicts in meeting schedules will have to be addressed. Let staff know if we have any conflicts. Some meetings will be held in the condo areas to hear from the condo leadership. Not all meetings will be held in the same place; we want to reach out to every neighborhood.

Meetings have been held over the years regarding incorporation and we have discussed it with the County Commission. This year after getting reports from the County Commission regarding other cities, the issue came out at a homeowners association meeting. A straw vote was held with the 150 people that were there, where the majority were interested in the concept of incorporating. A motion was carried at that meeting to send a letter to the County Commission to look into the concept of a municipal advisory committee, which ultimately became us.

10. Stan Price assured the public that he has no preconceived ideas. Ultimately the decision as to whether to incorporate, to try to be annexed by another municipality, or to keep the status quo, is a decision of the electorate in this area. We will just make a recommendation. He will listen and try to gain as much information as possible. He will listen to the concerns of his neighbors.

11. The Chair asked for views from the public attendees. Views were expressed and questions were posed to the staff and Committee. Much of the discussion that followed was in response to these comments and questions.

12. Ms. Crespo-Tabak stated that this is not a petition process with specific boundaries. This group is charged with studying the area, determining whether incorporation is feasible and whether the tax base is sufficient. The staff's responsibility is to facilitate the process while representing the County's interests as well. Commissioner Heyman stated that a sponsoring Commissioner can sponsor the creation of a MAC by Resolution. What this does is allow a group of people to be formed to create some ideas and advise the County Commission and the County picks up the tab.

13. Ken Friedman stated that we are going to continue to get facts over the next year to determine whether it is economically feasible, to determine whether it is in our best interests. It is an advisory committee. In public, together, we will come to conclusions. We need to keep an open mind in the process. If services are shrinking, what are the other choices: you either become a city yourself, where you determine your own destiny, and your own services; or you become annexed to somebody, if not North Miami Beach, then Aventura. Is Aventura interested in us? At this point no. Another alternative, on an informal basis, would be to stay in the County for a while and become a town and still be part of the County. The County is currently not considering this alternative. We should keep it on a positive note; the County is funding this process.

14. Ms. Crespo-Tabak stated that there is a website; the address will be available at the next meeting so that the public can go online and get information specific to the MAC. You may call 305-375-2014 and Jorge Fernandez will be more than glad to tell you when and where the next meeting is.

15. Stan Price stated that the School Board has designated two areas where they have indicated a desire to acquire property for an elementary school. They have sent out letters to the property owners seeking whether they want to negotiate a purchase and sale. Ms. Crespo-Tabak stated that School Board issues will not be affected, and that the MAC will not affect countywide issues.

16. Glen Gopman stated that our boundaries are basically bordering the other incorporated areas of neighborhood: (1) Northern border – Hallandale, (2) Eastern border – Aventura, (3) Southern border – North Miami Beach, (4) Western border- I95, the only area that is unincorporated that would be left outside of our study is the California Club area and the new City of Miami Gardens which was just incorporated is just west of the California Club. He discussed the representation of this Committee as to the area they live in and their backgrounds. We do not want to see peoples' taxes get raised. We want to see what we can all do together to improve our community.

17. Ms. Crespo-Tabak commenting on apathy mentioned that the number of people that made the decision in the City of Miami Gardens was 3,500 people out of 100,000. Do not let this happen to you. Greynolds Park is a County wide, regional park, which would stay under County jurisdiction. A park like the Ojus Park and Highland Oaks park are local parks and could end up as part of a new city.

18. Lauren Morris introduced herself. She works for Commissioner Heyman and has been working in this district for the past 13 years for members of Congress and other legislators. She has lived here for 30 years. Telephone number for Commissioner Heyman's office is 305-787-5999. She will be happy to take any questions. This is the local County Commission office located on 163rd Street. Can e-mail at lgm2@miamidade.gov or Heyman@miamidade.gov. E-mails are a matter of public record.

19. Glen Gopman announced that the next general meeting of the Homeowners' Association will be at the McDonald Center, at the City of North Miami Beach City Hall, on Wednesday, July 9, 2003, at 7:00 P.M. The honorable Mayor Alex Pinellas will be speaking.

20. Ken Friedman announced that the next Committee meeting is on June 11, 2003 at this facility at 7:00 P.M. The proposed agenda was discussed. Jorge Fernandez stated that there will be a financial presentation, where they will give the figures, for example the tax base, what the millage represents in terms of dollars for the area, and hopefully they will have all the information from the departments that they have asked for, and they can get us the revenues and expenses and we can see whether we would be a donor community or a recipient community. The dollars will be based on the projected boundaries that we have started with. The school is closed for the summer, so we will have to find an alternative location to meet starting with the July meeting.

21. Ken Friedman said that if any members of the public had ideas on other alternative projected boundaries they should let the Committee know. Jorge Fernandez stated that these boundaries are basically contiguous to everything. After the Committee creates its report, should it be favorable to go forward with incorporation or annexation, it has to go to the Boundaries Committee, and should our area create an enclave (an area left out that is surrounded by more than 70% of the newly incorporated areas), they will probably deny the application.

22. Glen Gopman asked for volunteers to rotate the position of recording secretary. No volunteers at this time. A recording secretary will be appointed for the July 2nd meeting since Roz Weisblum will not be in attendance. Vivian Dujos suggested that the Committee meet on the same day of the week for each meeting, which creates less confusion in the community, and people know to look for it and can expect it. Minutes will be distributed at each meeting.

23. Jorge Fernandez stated that there are 8,000 homes in the designated boundaries. Information for future meetings can be e-mailed to Committee members prior to meetings, if ready, so that Committee members can be prepared. The figures for residential and commercial properties are not broken down separately in the reports; the Committee would like to have these two groups divided into separate figures if possible. There is no CBI (Commercial Business Industrial) area in the designated boundaries. There are several sources of revenue that will be reported in the impact to UMSA. Also, there will be other revenues available to municipalities, not included in that report that we will go over in the next couple of meetings. All reports are public record and will be made available to anyone who requests them.

24. Jorge Fernandez pointed out that should we incorporate, we are required to use the Miami-Dade Police Department for a minimum of three years, with a one year transition into our own police department, should we so chose. Vivian Dujos pointed out that the Code currently also requires that any newly incorporated area continue with the County Solid Waste Collection, forever; the same with the Fire District and the Library District, the area would be required to remain in these County Districts. All the other municipal type services would be the responsibility of the new city, such as building, zoning, planning, code enforcement

25. The meeting was adjourned.

**Roslyn B. Weisblum
Recording Secretary**